

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 THE HA 02513 161601Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-05 PRS-01 MC-02 EURE-00

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P R 161508Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5924
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 2513

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, NL
SUBJ: F-104 REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT: MAY 15 MEETING OF CONSORTIUM MODS

REF: THE HAGUE 2496

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. AFTER MEETING OF FOUR CONSORTIUM MODS MAY 15, MOD
SPOKESMAN STATED THAT BELGIUM, HOLLAND AND DENMARK
HAD AGREED TO ANNOUNCE BEFORE THE END OF MAY WHICH
OF THE COMPETING AIRCRAFT EACH HAD CHOSEN TO REPLACE
THE F-104. (NORWAY HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED IT HAS
CHOSEN THE F-16 AS SUCCESSOR ON CONDITION THE OTHER
CONSORITIUM PARTNERS ALSO OPT FOR THE SAME AIRCRAFT.)
THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE THREE COUNTRIES WOULD ANNOUNCE
SIMILAR PROVISIONAL DECISIONS BUT ADDED THAT IF ALL
FOUR DID NOT MAKE THE SAME CHOICE "THE WHOLE QUESTION
WILL REMAIN OPEN." END UNCLASSIFIED

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BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL

2. ACCORDING TO DUTCH SOURCES, VREDELING AND HIS DANISH AND NORWEGIAN COLLEAGUES WERE FIRM IN KEEPING DISCUSSION TO QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT DESPITE VANDEN BOEYNANTS' EFFORTS TO AGAIN BRING UP MIRAGE AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE. THEY MADE IT CLEAR TO HIM THAT IF BELGIUM FAILED TO CHOOSE THE F-16 BELGIUM WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BREAK-UP OF THE CONSORTIUM. VANDEN BOEYNANTS REPORTEDLY TOOK ALL OF THIS RATHER BADLY AND WAS VISIBLY ANGERED WHEN HE LEFT MEETING.

3. VREDELING HIMSELF AND OTHERS IN HIS MINISTRY HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT A THREE-COUNTRY CONSORTIUM IS NOT POLITICALLY FEASIBLE FOR VREDELING OR THE DUTCH CABINET. PRIMIN DEN UYL AND MOD ARE WILLING TO FACE THE CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION TO F-16 CHOICE WITHIN THEIR OWN LABOR PARTY IF IT IS A FOUR-COUNTRY DECISION. HOWEVER, VREDELING SAYS HE IS NOT WILLING TO COMMIT THE GON IF BELGIUM WITHDRAWS FROM THE CONSORTIUM.

4. COMMENT: THIS ALPHONSE AND GASTON SITUATION BETWEEN THE DUTCH AND BELGIANS WOULD BE AMUSING IF THE STAKES WERE NOT SO SERIOUS. THE DUTCH SAY THE BELGIANS ARE THE KEY TO THE SITUATION AND PRIMIN TINDEMANS SAYS HE IS LOOKING FOR AN OUTSIDE CIRCUMSTANCE TO JUSTIFY THE GOB'S CHOICE OF THE F-16 (BRUSSELS 4313). AS SEEN FROM THE HAGUE THE SITUATION CALLS FOR A PUSH AND A SHOVE TO GET THEM THROUGH THE REVOLVING DOOR TOGETHER. END CONFIDENTIAL.
TANGUY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PROCUREMENT, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975THEHA02513
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750173-0006
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750543/aaaabmnj.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 THE HAGUE 2496
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 APR 2003 by Izenbel0>; APPROVED <03 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F-104 REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT: MAY 15 MEETING OF CONSORTIUM MODS
TAGS: MASS, NL, (BOEYNANTS, VANDEN), (VREDELING, HENDRIKUS), (UYL, JOHANNES DEN)
To: STATE BRUSSELS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006